The time at which a young man becomes a full fledged fisherman depends on his own ability and progress. Age is not a criterion of skill after a young man has had experience. Perhaps when he is 24, a young man can handle every phase of the work, including catching the swordfish. It is common for a young and an old man to work together, the one as master, the other as novice. There is no stated apprenticeship period. In bad weather, or in rough seas, only the unusually apt young fisherman is allowed to bring in a large fish by himself because of the danger of capsizing.

2

Types of Boats

All boats are now motor driven. There are 42 in the village, 41 of which are small skiffs. Three types of boats are distinguished: (1) the hatsudōki. This is little more than a good sized motorboat with a cabin. It carries about 8 men. There is one in the village. The small scale individualized character of fishing here is indicated by the smallness of the remaining craft. (2) the kuribune (literally, "hollowed out boat," from the verb kuru, to carve or to hollow out). Properly speaking, it is a boat carved out of a log, usually of the Japanese redwood (sugi) imported from Japan, but the term is extended to mean any small boat. This type has largely disappeared, and only one remains in the village. The hollowed out boat seems, in this area at least, to have become a lost art. It has been displaced by (3) the hagibune (jointed, pieced together boat). This is also made from the Japanese redwood and is constructed, often by the fishermen themselves, out of planks about 2 1/2 inches thick. There were 40 of these hagibune in January 1952. The number is never constant due to new building, losses at sea, or on shore from typhoon destruction.

These small boats do not require much maintenance. At typhoon times, they are lifted from the shore up over the breakwater and lashed down on the side of the road. This may not avoid destruction. If the breaking waves are high and strong, they crush the breakwater, hurling its stones against the boats. Every two months, the boats are thoroughly treated by rubbing with shark oil. Cracks and small holes are repaired with small wooden plugs, called fundu in Okinawan. These are shaped like a stylized butterfly. They are inserted in the bottom of the sides of the boats across the running planks, that is, against the grain.

3

Common Fish and How They Are Caught

In this area, many different kinds of fish are caught, but the following discussion is limited to the most plentiful and economically